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RESURGENCE OF THE NATIONAL GUARD: THE WALKER ERA

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL JOHNNY L.B. MCWHIRTER, FA

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RESURGENCE OF THE NATIONAL GUARD: THE WALKER ERA
AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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ABSTRACT

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The National Guard was placed in a position of increased importance in the national security planning with the approval of the Total Force Policy. No longer would the National Guard be a back-up force for the Active Army, but a front-line member of America's defense capability. The tremendous growth in the National Guard and the modernization and reorganization placed heavy responsibilities on the senior leadership of the National Guard. Lieutenant General Emmett H. Walker, Jr., was selected to lead the National Guard during the resurgence years as Deputy Director, Director, and Chief of the National Guard Bureau. He was at the hub of this dramatic transition providing the senior leadership that would propel the National Guard into the future. This paper will examine the leadership style of General Walker, analyzing the impact and rationale of his decisions. The primary source for the analysis is the tapes of an interview with General Walker conducted in December 1989. (SDW) 

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RESURGENCE OF THE NATIONAL GUARD:
THE WALKER ERA

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to determine the senior leadership requirements which are unique to the senior leaders of the Army National Guard. This will be accomplished by analyzing the senior leadership decisions of Lieutenant General Emmett H. Walker, Jr., the former Chief of the National Guard Bureau. The primary source for analysis was the oral history interview tapes of General Walker conducted in December 1989.¹ This paper will highlight important decisions which set the course for the Army National Guard for today and the future. This analysis will look at the impact of the decisions and the rationale for arriving at the decision.

BACKGROUND: STATUS OF THE NATIONAL GUARD

In the early 1970's the National Guard was suffering from a very poor public image. Its strength was reducing in light of the transition to an all-voluntary force. Its equipment was old and in need of modernization. Its

training readiness was low and its overall ability to accomplish the mission was in question.

In August 1973, the Secretary of Defense, Melvin Laird, announced the Total Force Policy, giving new focus to the Reserve components. He said, "Total force is no longer a concept. It is now the Total Force Policy which integrates the Active, Guard, and Reserve Forces into a homogeneous whole."² With this announcement, the National Guard was placed in a position of increased importance in national security planning. The reserve component forces were assigned vital missions which would not permit a slow-moving general mobilization, such as occurred during World War II. The organization of the Total Force virtually assured the mobilization of the reserve forces for any major contingency operation.³

A Total Force study was conducted to determine the most effective mix of active and reserve resources needed for our defense planning and readiness posture. This study identified three major findings and recommendations for improvement. These were to improve management of manpower and force structure of reserve components, improve equipment for the reserve components, and integrate reserve forces into active force missions.⁴

The increase in mission responsibilities with no

significant increase in resources created new challenges and opportunities for the leadership of the Army National Guard. Looking back on these challenges, Lieutenant General Lavern E. Weber, then Chief of the National Guard Bureau, said, "If we accept such missions without the resources to accomplish them then, we may be programming ourselves for failure--a failure that could have been a success except for the scarce resources."⁵ Additional resources would certainly be required for the National Guard to execute the increased responsibilities for national defense. The challenge to the leadership of the National Guard would be to identify the most effective use of those resources within the National Guard structure.⁶

This period of dramatic transition from the old role of augmentation and back-up to active component forces, to its new role as a front-line member of nation's defensive team would require new thinking in the National Guard. The National Guard needed its finest and brightest in the senior leadership positions, leaders who knew the National Guard and the effects that the decisions would have on the operation of the National Guard units. Lieutenant General Emmett H. Walker, Jr., a Mississippi National Guardsman, was one who led the

National Guard Bureau during these transition years. General Walker was assigned to the National Guard Bureau in 1976 as the Deputy Director of the Army National Guard. His service at the National Guard Bureau spanned ten years and he ascended to the position of Chief of the National Guard in 1982.

LIMITATIONS

This study is limited to an analysis of General Walker's style as a senior leader and his decisions during his assignment to the National Guard Bureau. Although General Walker implemented many important programs during his tenure, this study will focus on two key decisions which were unique to the Army National Guard: One dealt with capstone program and the second with the full-time manning. Both occurred between 1976 and 1986.

ENDNOTES

1. Interview Tapes with Emmett H. Walker, Jr., LTG, (Ret), U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, 17 December 1989.
2. Secretary of Defense Memorandum, Subject: Readiness of the Selected Reserve, 23 August 1773.
3. "A Long-Range look at the Future of the Army and Air National Guard, VISTA 1990 TASK FORCE REPORT, March 1982, p.3.
4. Department of Defense, Annual Report of the Secretary of Defense on Reserve Forces, FY75, p.10.
5. Lavern E. Weber, LTG, (Ret), "Growth in the Guard's Full-Time Force, National Guard, January 1988, p.12.
6. Wayman D. Robertson, LTC, The Importance of Full-Time Manning in the Army National Guard, p.9.

CHAPTER II

THE TOTAL FORCE PROGRAMS: AFFILIATION TO CAPSTONE

Historically the United States has maintained a small active Army backed up with reserve forces to fight its wars. United States military leaders from General George Washington to General Carl E. Vuono, current Army Chief of Staff, have stressed the importance of the National Guard and Reserve in filling the gaps in the United States military force requirements. But the current policy toward greater reliance on the reserve component began when the "Total force" concept surfaced as a part of the All-Volunteer Force Policy in 1970. In August, 1970, Secretary of Defense Melvin R Laird announced, "The economics in the defense budget would require increased reliance on combat and combat support units of the Guard and Reserve."¹ This was reinforced in 1973 when Secretary Laird further announced, "Total force is no longer a concept. It is now the total force policy which integrates the Active, Guard and Reserve Forces into a homogeneous whole."²

In 1973, as a result of this increased reliance on reserve forces, the Army leadership approved the affiliation program to improve the mobilization and

deployment readiness for selected reserve component units. This program aligned a select few reserve component units with active component units and resourced them to foster a close training association. Originally the affiliation program consisted of two classes of units: affiliated and round out units.³ The affiliated units were aligned for training and training assistance but did not have a go-to-war relationship. This program proved very successful in upgrading the readiness and capabilities of the reserve component units.

Under the round out program, reserve component units were selected to "round out" or complete the structure of active component divisions, which did not have all the units they would need to go to war. Differing from the affiliated program, the round out units had a command relationship with its active component unit. The round out units were brought to full TO&E for personnel and equipment and given the same resources priority as their parent unit. A valuable part of the round out program was the direct deployment of reserve component units with their parent units for contingency operations. Never before in peace time had the association between the active component and reserve component units been so close.⁴

An outgrowth of the affiliation program was the Capstone Program, approved in 1979. Capstone aligned all active and reserve component units into a wartime organization, designed to meet the enemy threat based on a global or regional operational plans (OPLANS). This program provided reserve component units the basis to focus planning and training efforts on their wartime mission. Reserve component units could concentrate their limited training resources directly on their wartime mission. Capstone Program tied the Total Army system together by giving every unit a mission and a purpose for being in the force structure.⁵

General Walker, as Director of the Army National Guard, was the principal architect for implementing the Capstone Program into the National Guard. He worked closely with General Robert R. Shoemaker, Forces Command (FORSCOM) commander, to insure the this program was consistent with the needs of the National Guard. General Walker had a clear vision of how the Capstone Program might work for the Army National Guard. He viewed the Capstone Program as a vital element to the reestablishment of the National Guard as a major partner of the nation's war fighting capability. He said, "This program gave the National Guard a purpose for being in the Army structure."

A major concern for General Walker was to orchestrate the program details to insure support at the state level. General Walker carefully designed a program which was politically acceptable to the active Army leadership, the National Guard Bureau, and the state military departments. Capstone changed the focus and method operation for the Army National Guard. Because of these changes, some state adjutant generals were apprehensive about the program, which threatened to reduce some of their authority over the National Guard. General Walker had to insure that their concerns were addressed, because he knew the success of the program hinged upon their support. To accomplish this, General Walker structured the program so the adjutant generals would maintain control over the units' resources.

The chain of command linkage in the Capstone Program was also of great concern to General Walker, because it overlay the peacetime with a wartime chain of command. General Walker knew that these relationships had to be delicately balanced; so, he envisioned both chain of commands having responsibilities for a portion of the training of the National Guard units. This mix of the responsibilities would be critical to its success. Without the proper mix of responsibilities, conflicts would occur between peacetime and wartime chain of commands. Should

this happen the readiness of the units would suffer and the ability to accomplish their mission would be in question. He accomplished the proper mix by making the peacetime chain of command responsible to meet the wartime chain of command's requirement for qualified units to achieve its wartime mission. The National Guard units would receive their guidance, training standards, and mission requirements from their wartime commander.

Successful implementation of the Capstone Program was a major milestone in the history of the Army National Guard. Without a wartime mission the National Guard had had nothing to provide the focus for preparing its units for war. General Walker said, "Capstone filled the biggest void between the active component and the reserve component." Capstone provided National Guard units an upward and downward trace, giving them a real wartime mission. With the National Guard units tied to active component units, they became true partners in the Total Army.

ENDNOTES

1. Secretary of Defense Memorandum, Subject: Support for Guard and Reserve Forces, 21 August 1970.
2. Secretary of Defense Memorandum, Subject: Readiness of the selected Reserve, 23 August 1973.
3. Army Command and Management: Theory and Practice, A Reference Text for Department of Command, Leadership, and Management, 1988-1989, p.13-11.
4. Ibid.
5. Jerry C. Smithers, LTC, Reserve Component Training Under Capstone, 15 March 1989, p.5.

CHAPTER III

FULL TIME FORCE ASSIGNMENTS

The changes in the missions and responsibilities of the National Guard with no additional full-time support personnel, caused an administrative nightmare for the National Guard units. The Army National Guard had historically operated its units with only one full-time employee, a civil service technician, called the unit administrative supply technician (AST). The unit AST was responsible for the administration of the maintenance, supply, mess, training, personnel, and other records. The increased mission responsibilities and no additional full-time personnel overloaded the unit ASTs.¹ As General Walker stated, "The administration was killing us. We had no one tending to training. We simply had to have more full-time people if we were to attain the readiness level being expected of us." Since Congress had capped the strength of the civil service technicians, there were only two categories of personnel which could be used to increase the Guard's full-time staff, active Army personnel and active duty guardsmen.

In 1978 General Walker had a meeting with two general officers from the Army Staff to discuss the full-time

support for the National Guard. After some discussion, one general from the Army Staff asked, "How many active duty soldiers the Army could give to the National Guard as full-time support?" The other responded, "Five hundred," and left the room. General Walker said, "There was no special basis for that number; he just seemed to reach up and get the figure." He went on to say, "I can tell you, this is the way some important decisions are made in the Pentagon." This incident showed that the leadership of the active Army did not fully understand the magnitude of the problem and were not prepared to commit an adequate number of soldiers to solve the problem. This number of 500 active component soldiers was far below the number of full-time personnel the National Guard needed to meet General Walker's plan.

There was a difference of opinion between the leadership of the active Army and the leadership of the National Guard, as whether the full-time personnel should be National Guardsmen or active duty soldiers. The active Army leadership wanted to place active component soldiers in local National Guard units to provide the additional full-time personnel. On the other hand, General Walker

felt the National Guard needed to have its own soldiers filling the full-time positions in the National Guard units.

Although convinced that the full-time staff should be National Guardsmen, General Walker accepted the active Army's offer to assign soldiers to three year tours in National Guard units. General Walker's rationale for accepting the active Army soldiers was that he could show how readiness could be improved by increasing the full-time staff and he could validate his staffing pattern plan. This was the first time in history that active duty soldiers had been assigned to Table of Organization and Equipment (TO&E) positions in the National Guard units. The soldiers in this program are not advisers; they are unit workers.²

General Walker saw several deficiencies in having active Army soldiers assigned to full-time position in the National Guard. First, this approach offered to provide only a practical solution to a pressing issue. The placing of 500 active component soldiers in 2,600 National Guard units would not completely solve the pressing shortage of full-time support personnel. Since this was only a practical solution, General Walker placed the new full-time personnel in the high-priority, round out and affiliated

units. This was consistent with his program of resourcing the "first to fight" units first. These units made up only a small percentage of the total National Guard structure.

Second, General Walker felt that the active Army needed its soldiers to meet its own mission requirements. The active Army would have to take soldiers out of existing units in order to place them in National Guard units, since they did not receive an increase in authorized strength. General Walker knew that the active Army leadership would be under great pressure to remove its soldiers from full-time positions in the National Guard units as the demands increased for new units in the active structure. He had seen this occur with the active component adviser program and wanted the National Guard to be able to control its own destiny. He wanted to build an infrastructure of full-time National Guardsmen to staff the 2,600 National Guard units.

Third, General Walker preferred to use active duty National Guardsmen as full-time personnel in the National Guard units, because he felt the National Guard had just as capable soldiers as the active Army. But he knew that the National Guard would have to implement tough training standards for the full-time force in order for his position to have validity.

The worldwide assignment requirement of active duty soldiers was another source of great concern to General Walker. He envisioned a full-time National Guard force that provided the same stability as the AST force. Moreover, he wanted a force which could serve a career in the National Guard and understand the unique characteristics of the National Guard. Having worldwide assignments as a requirement would make it difficult for the active component soldiers to fit in as a National Guard member. Traditionally National Guard units are community oriented and made up of local citizens. The citizen-soldier concept, based on close ties to the community, is one of the strengths of the Guard. The active component soldier's ties are normally with the active Army, not with the community. As General Walker said, "Show me a Guard unit that is not community oriented and I'll show you a Guard unit that is not worth a damn." The National Guard full-time force, not subject to a worldwide assignment program, normally serve a full career within the confines of the state and under the state adjutant general's control.

The National Guard's ability to perform its state missions would also be impaired if a large percentage of the full-time members were active Army personnel. Active

component soldiers would not be available to preform the state missions without changes to the federal law. This situation would be unacceptable to the National Guard, which must be capable of performing the state missions of assisting law enforcement officials and responding to natural disasters or civil disturbances. General Walker knew the elimination of the full-time cadre from performing the state mission would detract from the National Guard's ability to perform the state missions.

General Walker's insight was critical in acquiring the proper full-time staff. The Full-Time Manning (FTM) Program was developed and implemented in December of 1979. This program provided additional full-time personnel to selected units to enhance readiness through improved training, administration, supply, and maintenance. The FTM Program authorized active duty positions in the National Guard units which could be filled by either National Guard or active Army personnel. By the end of 1982 the Army National Guard had 3,315 FTM authorized: 2,476 Army National Guard and 839 active Army.³ This was the beginning of the Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) program, which has grown to a strength of 25,725 in 1989.

A vital part of the AGR program was the educational requirements for all full-time National Guard personnel.

Prior to General Walker's assignment to the National Guard Bureau there was no requirement of the training of the full-time force in the National Guard. General Walker viewed this as a serious flaw in the National Guard full-time manning system. In order to correct this deficiency, he implemented an educational program for the full-time Guardsmen which required the same training as their active component counterpart. General Walker's vision for the full-time force was that they would be the infrastructure of the National Guard. General Walker wanted a trained, disciplined, and fully competent full-time force upon which to build the National Guard of the future. This emphasis established credibility in the full-time manning program since it required the same quality of personnel as required on active duty.

General Walker's number one priority for the AGR program was to place a full-time man in every company size National Guard unit to look after training. Since training is the key to readiness, General Walker viewed the full-time unit training NCO as critical to the National Guard's ability to increase its readiness. General Walker stated, "We had to have someone tending to training, someone looking after training on a daily basis at the unit level." Uncompromising on his position, he placed a full-

time man in every company size unit to perform the training administration of ordering materials, publishing schedules, requesting ranges, and preparing each training assembly. His game plan was to place a full-time trainer at every level from unit to division.

According to General Walker, "The AGR program was a life saver. We in the National Guard simply could not have met the readiness requirements being demanded of us without more full time personnel." General Walker's experience as a Battalion Administrative Assistant proved invaluable in the formulation of the full-time manning program, and provided him the proper frame of reference to carefully guide the implementation of this critical program.

ENDNOTES

1. Wayman D. Robertson, LTC, The Importance of Full-Time Manning in the Army National Guard, 15 April 1983, p.2.
2. Army Command and Management: Theory and Practice, A Reference Text for Department of Command, Leadership, and Management, 1988-1989, p.13-13.
3. Information Papers, NGB-RM-P, National Guard Bureau, December 1982.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

In general, the senior leadership requirements in the National Guard Bureau are no different from those in any other large military organization. In particular, the differences arise from the unique missions, organizations, structures, and operations of the National Guard. These particular differences are significant. National Guard Bureau leaders must thoroughly understand the uniqueness of the National Guard, as well as the Active Army and its missions, to lead effectively at that level. General Walker was well qualified to lead the National Guard Bureau, after previously serving in World War II and the Korean War and for 27 years in the Mississippi National Guard. This experience proved invaluable to General Walker as he led the National Guard through the years of transition from a hand-me-down, back-up force to a full partner in the Total Force Program.

General Walker's assignment to the National Guard Bureau spanned ten of the most exciting years in the history of the National Guard. He was at the hub of events that brought dramatic changes to the National Guard. Never in peacetime had the National Guard assumed such a critical role in the national military strategy of the United States.

General Walker's leadership style can be characterized as providing a vision of what the plan should look like and always having a game plan to accomplish his visions. General Walker's goal-oriented approach to problem solving carried him to success at the highest level.

General Walker's understanding of the political constraints imposed by the structure of the National Guard was critical to accomplishing vast changes in the National Guard. The balancing of the political pressures between the state adjutant general, active Army leadership, and national political leadership was a talent that General Walker had in unusual measure. He developed a political base unmatched in the history of the National Guard.

General Walker proved himself able to lead the National Guard during these transition years. In so doing he earned the highest respect of many. As Edwin Meese, III, U.S. Attorney General, said of General Walker's achievements, "Today, as perhaps never before in a peace time situation, the National Guard is manned, equipped, trained, and counted on as an intricate and vital part of our total military force."¹⁰

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1. "What They Said", National Guard, December 1987,
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10. Walker, Emmett H. Jr., LTG. (Ret). Oral History Interview Tapes. U.S. Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pa., 17 December 1989.
11. Weber, Lavern E., LTG (Ret). "Growth in the Guard's Full-time Force." National Guard. January 1988, p. 12.